

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Pursuit of Happyness is an American drama movie which is directed by Gabriele Muccino. The screenwriter is Steve Conrad and produced by Todd Back, Jason Blumenthal, Steve Tisch, James Lassiter, and Will Smith. It is distributed by [Columbia Pictures](#). It is set in San Francisco on 1981. The duration is 117 minutes. *The Pursuit of Happyness* was released in USA at 15 December 2006. This film gets many nominations for Oscar, wins 9 awards and 17 nominations. The movie is about chance to get success and happiness.

The Pursuit of Happyness was inspired by a real life. Gabriele Muccino as movie director *The Pursuit of Happyness*, was born in Rome, Italy, 20 May 1967. Muccino enrolled in faculty of letters at Rome's "la Sapienza" university. He is Italian director; working in Europe was always easier than working in America. He begins his film career as an assistant to Italian director's Pupi Avati ("*The Story of Boy and Girls*") and Marco Risi ("*Steam: The Turkish Bath*"). Muccino is directing debut earned him a spot in the 1998 in film festival where he received a nomination for Best Direction. Film "The Last Kiss" that propelled Muccino into the international spotlight. In award he wins 6 awards and 14 nominations.

The Pursuit of Happyness tells about chance of everybody to be successful and happy in his life. He is Chris Gardner; he is a smart man and hard worker. He has wife whose name Linda and their son is Christopher. Chris

Gardner is a medical asset salesman. He makes the transition from a self-employed bone density scanner salesman to a stockbroker intern, as he struggles to keep a roof over his family's head. Bone-density scanners was taken from Chris's money infestation and his wife which appears very hard to sell. Chris Gardner tried to sell it from one hospital to another hospital, he had target to sell the bone-density scanners, at least two items as the expense for his necessity. Moreover, his wife, Linda, helped family's finance by working in the factory. After an all time sales, low Chris saw someone driving up in a fancy car and stunned by he asked the man parking what his job is, as he wants to be like him eagerly. The man admits he is a stockbroker. Starting from this occurrence, Chris begins his dream to get into brokering, but his wife is not interested in his dreams, leaving Chris to look after his son, Christopher, on his own whilst he deals with the problem directly and goes for what he believes in. Gardner's wife has no faith in him. After bitching and moaning endlessly and trying to kill his dreams, she leaves Gardner to raise his son on virtually no money. At this time his wife left Chris and Christopher to work in New York. Gardner, without a college education, enters an internship for stockbrokers at Dean Witter. He wants to change his life in there. But he is not paid to work and must raise his son and success in the internship while homeless. Gardner lives with his son in homeless shelters, subway station bathrooms, and cheap motel rooms are no exaggeration. The struggle of Chris to get job is very hard, finally Chris gets opportunity 6 month to apprentice without salary in the office. The struggle is not finished. He

must compete with 20 people to get one job in the office. Chris does not have home and money, but finally he gets the job in Dean Witter as stockbroker.

There are various responses about *The Pursuit of Happyness*, in pro and contra. The data of the audience responses shows that most of the audiences like this film. The first is pro. First, *Kate Stables, Sight, and Sound*, he says, "The film is a fully fledged message movie. Not since KRAMER VS. KRAMER has single fatherhood been so lovingly portrayed." Second, *Donnie (Oakland City, IN, USA)*. He says Will Smith is superb in this movie and he should have won the academy award. This true story and the message to keep trying even when things seem hopeless and never give up is fantastic and will make others not complain about some of the little things that we complain about. Mr. Gardner's struggle with homelessness and poverty and how hard he worked while going through all of this to achieve what he did is very inspiring. Third, [*tpollardberry*](#) (*Folcroft, Pa USA*). He really loved this film because it definitely touches the heart and soul of any human being. It makes you reach down in your inner most being and want to reach for all your dreams inside of you that you had locked away like a prisoner waiting to just break away and to be truly free. Will Smith and his son Jayden are truly remarkable together on screen the connection that they have between them is pure chemistry. This movie makes you laugh and cry but most of all it inspires the human spirit above all obstacles that life brings us on a daily basis.

Secondly are contra. First, *Thomas*. He says, "The movie makes me sleep in my desk." Second, *Jerry the Cow*, "The movie got boring in parts, and the ending tried to wrap everything up too quickly."

The Pursuit of Happyness is a box office movie. The movie had \$55,000,000 budget and it grossed \$307,077,295. It is success because the film debuted at the first at the North America box office, earning \$27 million during its opening weekend. It was Will Smith's sixth consecutive at the first opening. The film grossed \$162 million in the US and Canada and a further \$141 million in other markets, for a total worldwide box office of \$304 million. As of November 2007, US Region One DVD sales accounted for an additional \$90 million in revenue, slightly less than half of which was earned in its first week of release.

Not only box office success, film industry also gives *The Pursuit of Happyness* good appreciation. Some awards and nominee have got by *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie. First, Academy awards popularly known as the Oscars, are presented annually by the American academy of motion picture arts and sciences to recognize excellence of professionals in the film industry, including directors, actors, and writers. The formal ceremony at which the awards are presented is one of the most prominent award ceremonies in the world. Will Smith is nominee for best actor from *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie.

Second, The Golden Globe awards are presented annually by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) to recognize outstanding achievements in entertainment industry, both domestic and foreign, and to focus wide public attention upon the best in motion pictures and television. The formal ceremony and dinner at which the awards are presented is a major part of the film

industry's awards season, which culminates each year with the academy awards. Here, in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie some nominee awards were getting. They are, first, Will Smith for best actor - motion picture drama (nominee), second, world and music by Seal for best original song "A father's way" (nominee).

Third, The Black Reel awards began in 2000 and were designed to annually recognize and celebrate the achievements of Black people in feature, independent and television films. Awards range from the art of character portrayals to the artistry displayed behind the camera. *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie gets some nominee. They are first, *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for best movie (nominee). Second, Will Smith for best actor in motion picture (nominee). Third, Jaden Smith for best breakthrough performance (nominee).

Fourth, The NAACP Image award is an award presented annually by American National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to honor outstanding people of color in film, television, music, and literature. *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie get some winner and nominee. They are first, *The Pursuit of Happyness* for outstanding motion picture (winner). Second, Jaden Smith for outstanding supporting actor in a motion picture (nominee). Third, Thandie Newton for outstanding supporting actress in motion picture (nominee).

Fifth, The Screen Actors Guild awards are an annual award given by the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) to recognize outstanding performance by members. SAG award have been one of the major awards events in Hollywood. Will Smith

in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for outstanding performance by a male actor in leading role - motion picture (nominee).

Sixth, the MTV movie awards is a film awards show presented annually on MTV (Music Television). It also contains movie parodies that used official movie parodies that used official movie footage with hosts and other celebrities and music performances. The nominee is decided by a special panel at tenth planet productions, the MTV movie awards. Winners are decided by the general public. Presently voting is done through MTV's official website through a special movie award link. Jaden Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie is a winner for best male performance.

Seventh, the Broadcast Film Critics Association awards (BFCA) is the largest film critic's organization in the U.S and Canada, representing 199 television, and radio and online critics. Every year the association, founded in 1995 by Joey Berlin and Rod Lurie, presents its critics choice awards to honor the finest achievements in filmmaking. *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie gets two nominee awards. They are, first, Will Smith for best actor (nominee), and Second, Jaden Smith for best young Actor (nominee).

Eight, the BET awards were established in 2001 by the Black Entertainment Television network to celebrate African-Americans and often minorities in music, acting, sports, and other fields of entertainment over the past year. The awards are presented annually and Will Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for best actor (nominee).

Ninth, The Phoenix Film Critics Society (PFCS) is an organization of film reviewers from Phoenix based publications. Jaden Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for best performance by youth in leading or supporting role male (winner).

Tenth, The Annual Chicago Film Critics Association awards, located in Chicago, USA. The media type is film and the event type is critics' event. Will Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for best actor (nominee).

Eleventh, David di Donatello, named after Donnatello's David, is a movie awards assigned each year for cinematic performances and production by Ente David di Donatello, part of Academy del Cinema Italiano. It is the Italian equivalent to the academy award. Gabrielle Muccino director in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for the best language movie nominee. The last, Capri Awards. Capri, Hollywood-kimbo International Film Festival (2005) Capri, Hollywood. The type of Capri awards are film and music. The initiator is Istituto Capri Del Mondo. The Capri, Hollywood symposium and film festival is an event involving individual's who have continuously made a strong contribution to the promotion of film as an international form of art, expanding beyond the borders of their own countries. *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie is a winner for movie of the year.

There are five aspects as the appeals of this film. They are theme, plot, character, casting, and mise-en-scene. First appeal point is theme aspect. The theme of this movie is that everybody has a chance to get success and happiness

in his life. *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie explains about the struggle, adversity, failure, hopes, success, happiness, and ambition.

Second, dealing with the plot. Plot is the interesting conflicts that are happened in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie. The interesting conflicts are at the time Chris Gardner's wife leaves him, he as single dad; he losses his house, his bank account, and credit cards. Forced to live out in the streets with his son, Chris is now desperate to find a steady job, he takes on a job as a stockbroker, but before he can receive pay, he needs to go through sixth months of training, and to sell his device, in the other word he is unpaid in the beginning work in the firm.

The third is character. *The Pursuit of Happyness* shows up various and strong character. All characters always crash each other. One character can help to move the story forward. The character of Chris Gardner as a major character is a man that has unique personality and high responsibility to his family. He is hard worker, smart, initiative, self – confident, loving and caring, and persevering. He has good relationship with other people, he is bright and talented in his job as a salesman. Chris Gardner is a hard worker and always-positive thinking in his life.

The fourth is casting. The cast is uniformly strong. Every actor and actress get quite balance characterization. The last reason is mise-en-scene. Mise-en-scene consists of lighting, costumes, make-up, and music. Lighting of this film gives strong impression. Not only that, the costumes and make up represent the characterization and appropriate to the setting of place and time. This film has a best-selected and composed music that carries the grief and joys that each of the characters endures from the screen to the audience.

In America, many people went there to reach their dream. They consider that the city will make dream come true, so that their life will be better. It is so-called American Dream. The American Dream as the myth, belief and value of American people. It is also a subjective term usually implying a successful and satisfying life. The American Dream can be interpreted in many ways. It is also different according to each individual. The American Dream has been changed from time to time. The standard of American Dream usually consists of ideas such as equality, liberty, freedom, social respectability, happiness, and prosperity.

Dealing with literature, sociology has a close relationship with it. Literature is reflection of reality in a various ways. Therefore, literature cannot be separated from the society, and the study of literature should be related to the society.

Based on the background above, the writer will observe *The Pursuit of Happyness* by using sociological theory because of consideration below. It is appropriate of note to analyze the work by using a Sociological approach. So, the writer constructs the title **THE MYTH OF AMERICAN DREAM IN GABRIELE MUCCINO'S *THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS*: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.**

B. Previous Study

In this research, the writer uses such previous researches to prove the originality of the research.

The first research by Nufus (UMS, 2009) entitled *Struggle of Chris Gartner to Get Happiness on The Pursuit of Happyness Movie: An Individual*

Psychological Approach. She describes how the struggle of major character to get happiness and the message from this movie is people must struggle to get better life; and the individual psychology shows that weak feeling of some people when he or she is down can be a spirit and power to change his or her life to be better and it is called struggle.

The second research by Herarsih (UMS, 2008) entitled *Chris Gardner's Motivation in Striving for his Happiness as Seen in The Pursuit of Happyness Film*. She describes the personality of Chris Gardner, explains Chris Gardner motivation, and finds out Chris Gardner's obstructions in pursuing his happiness.

Based on the description above, the researches above are different with the writer here because the first research, the previous researcher uses individual psychological as approach but the writer uses sociological approach. And the second research, the researcher describes the personality of major character in *The Pursuit of Happyness*, but the writer reveals the myth of American Dream in that movie. The similarity of this research is the use of *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie as data source.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the phenomena mentioned on the background of this study, the writer proposes problem "How is the myth of American Dream reflected in Gabriele Muccino's *The Pursuit of Happyness*?"

D. Objective of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the researcher can propose objective of the study below.

1. To analyze the structural elements in *The Pursuit of Happyness* film.
2. To reveal the myth of American Dream in *The Pursuit of Happyness* film based on sociological approach.

E. Limitation of the Study

To make the research appropriate to the objective of the study, the researcher will make a limitation to the research. She will only focus on how is the myth of American Dream reflected in Gabriele Muccino's *The Pursuit of Happyness* film by using a sociological approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

From this research, the writer hopes that this study has some benefits.

1. Theoretical Benefit

To give deeper understandings in literary field as the reference to the other researcher, and to enrich the literary study.

2. Practical Benefit

To give some contributions to the larger body in knowledge or the development of knowledge particularly studies in Gabriele Muccino's *The Pursuit of Happyness* film.

G. Research Method

1. Type of Research

In this study, the writer uses the descriptive qualitative method as type of the research. It is qualitative because it analyzes the myth of American Dream in *The Pursuit of Happyness* film based on sociological approach.

2. Object of the Research

The object of the research is the myth of American Dream reflected in Gabriele Muccino's *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

3. Data and Data Source

- a. The data in this study are text and image that consists of words, phrases and sentences.
- b. There are two data sources in this study. They are the primary data source and secondary data sources.

1) Primary Data Source

The primary data source of the study is the "*The Pursuit of Happyness*" movie by Gabriele Muccino and it is taken from dialogue, attitude, and all statements in the text of the film which relevant with the research.

2) Secondary Data Source

The secondary data source consists of the other data are taken from the books, journals, articles and internet which have related to this study.

4. Method of Collecting Data

Method of data collection used by the writer is the documentation method. The procedures of collecting data are as follows:

- a. watching the work many times,
- b. taking notes of the information both primary and secondary data,
- c. capturing image until the researcher gets adequate information or data analysis, and
- d. arranging and developing the data into several information.

5. Method of Analyzing Data

For analyzing the film, the researcher uses descriptive analysis technique. It is begun with analyzing the structural elements and then sociological analysis. It is an interpretation of the text and content to get understanding of the data based on sociological analysis on the film.

H. Research Paper Organization

This research paper is divided into six chapters. Chapter I is introduction that consists of the background of the study, previous study, problem statement, objective of the study, limitation of the study, benefits of the study, research method, and research paper organization. Chapter II delivers underlying theory, which covers the notion of sociology of literature, major principles of sociology of literature, notion of myth of American Dream, structural elements of the movie, and theoretical application. Chapter III is social historical background of American society in the late twentieth up to the early twenty first century. Chapter IV is structural analysis of the

movie, which involves the structural elements of character and characterization, casting, point of view, plot, theme, mise-en-scene, cinematography, and discussion. Chapter V constitutes sociological analysis of the movie. The last is Chapter VI contains conclusion and suggestion.